

# Remarks by the Vice President to the NFIB

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you, Juanita. Give Juanita another round of applause, will you? She is a great, great champion of small business. (Applause.) And I want to thank her for that warm and overly generous introduction and for her leadership of this great organization.

And to be here today to be able to welcome all of you, welcome you to Washington, D.C., it is an honor to be with all of you, with the NFIB, a pillar of American opportunity and prosperity. (Applause.)

The National Federation of Independent Business has been such an extraordinary champion over the decades for small businesses and entrepreneurs across this country, and it's great to be able to address you today.

And it's a particular honor for me to bring greetings from a friend of mine who himself is a businessman in an independent business who's fighting every day for job creators just like all of you -- the 45th President of the United States of America, President Donald Trump. (Applause.)

The President sent me here this morning to deliver a message but first and foremost to just to say thanks. With the strong support of small-business owners like you all across this country, President Trump last fall won a historic victory -- more counties than any President since Ronald Reagan; 30 of 50 states, states no Republican had actually carried in a generation. And the President and I could couldn't be more grateful for the men and women of the NFIB who stood with this President all along the way. Thank you for your support. (Applause.)

And before I go any further, let me give you a quick update on one of the President's top promises and top priorities. As we speak, the President and I are pleased to report here in this building the United States Senate is moving forward on legislation to repeal and replace Obamacare. (Applause.)

And in the coming days, with the leadership of our President, the American people and American small businesses I believe will witness the beginning of the end of the Obamacare nightmare. (Applause.)

I'll speak more about that -- I'll speak more about healthcare in just a few moments. But first, let me again give my thanks and admiration to all the members of the National Federation of Independent Business.

NFIB is a titan of American excellence and entrepreneurship. For nearly 75 years, the NFIB has brought together American small businesses and given them a voice in the halls of government.

Today those of you gathered in this auditorium at the United States Capitol represent a staggering 325,000 small businesses from every state in this country, and it's remarkable to think about the impact that each and every one of you have.

You create jobs. You provide a pathway of opportunity for generations of Americans. And you are literally the cornerstone of American communities from the smallest towns to the largest cities.

President Trump probably said it best when he said that small businesses in his words, embody the American pioneering spirit and remind us that determination can turn aspiration into achievement every single day.

And he couldn't be more right about small businesses in America. Give yourselves a round of applause for the difference that you make each and every day. (Applause.)

I just had the joy of meeting with about 20 small businesses from my home state of Indiana, and it's great to see so many good friends here who I know make a tremendous difference back in the Hoosier State.

Now they know that I actually grew up in a small family business in a small town in southern Indiana. I went to work at my dad's gas stations when I was only about 14 years of age. I know the sacrifices that small-business owners make, and I know that a small business is really all about family -- whether it's your immediate family, your extended family, or the family of your employees. And so I understand and appreciate the sacrifices and the unique joys of being involved in a small business.

And as the world knows, President Trump grew up in a family business, too -- although his ended up to be a little bit bigger than my family's. (Laughter.)

We both know the sacrifices that are required, though, to make a business work. And more than that, President Trump and I know that when small business is strong, America is strong. (Applause.)

We both know small businesses are the engine of the American economy, and since day one of this administration, President Trump has been fighting to restart the engine of this economy and rev it up like never before.

Our President has picked a world-class Cabinet full of entrepreneurs -- including the head of the Small Business Administration, Administrator Linda McMahon, who is an outstanding American success story. (Applause.)

And with the support of his Cabinet and with the help of the Congress, President Trump has been busy rolling back the heavy hand of government on small business.

I'm happy to report to you this President has actually signed more laws cutting through federal red tape than any President in American history. (Applause.)

The legislation the President has already signed that Congress put on his desk is saving businesses like yours up to \$18 billion a year in regulatory costs.

In fact, the President also instructed every agency in Washington, D.C. to find two regulations to get rid of before issuing any new federal red tape on America's job creators. (Applause.)

And in case you didn't notice, the American people elected a builder to be President of the United States, and President Trump has already started to rebuild America. And we won't stop until America once again has the best roads, the best bridges, the best airports, and the best harbors, and the best future we could ever have. (Applause.)

President Trump's leadership is already making a remarkable difference, too. Since Inauguration Day I'm pleased to report businesses like those gathered here today have created more than 850,000, new, good-paying jobs all across America. (Applause.)

Company after company are responding to the President's agenda with optimism and investment, like the historic investment that was made in an announcement yesterday at the White House alone by Foxconn, a company investing \$10 billion in the heartland of America.

And small businesses and manufacturers we're told haven't been this confident in a decade or more, and they should be -- because our President is a man of his word. He's a man of action. And under President Donald Trump, American small business is back and prosperity is here to stay! (Applause.)

But it has been a busy six months, but the President likes to say in the Oval Office, that's what we call just a good start. The truth is we got a lot more work to do. And as I said at the outset, in the coming days, President Trump, working with this Congress, is absolutely committed to rescue the American people from the disaster of Obamacare. (Applause.)

We all know the truth: Every day Obamacare survives is another day that American businesses and American families struggle.

We all remember the broken promises they made to get Obamacare passed. They said if you like your doctor you could keep them -- not true. They said if you liked your health insurance you could keep it -- not true. We were told the cost of health insurance would go down if Obamacare passed seven years ago -- that one is absolutely not true.

In fact, our administration has confirmed that the average premium on the individual market has more than doubled since Obamacare went into effect less than four years ago, and in many states, it's more than tripled.

When Obamacare passed, we were actually promised that families would save up to \$2,500 in premiums every year, but the average Obamacare plan today costs nearly \$3,000 more than a plan did in 2013. But I don't have to tell small-business owners about the struggle and the crisis in health insurance costs in America today.

You all know also that, while premiums are soaring, choices are plummeting. Next year, about 40 percent of America's counties, including nine whole states, will have only one choice of a health insurance provider, which means they have no choice at all.

Even worse, dozens of counties will have no health insurance providers whatsoever on the Obamacare exchange in 2018. It's important to remember that while we think of these statistics and we reflect on them as policymakers, we're talking about real people facing a real crisis. You all know each and every day that behind every one of these numbers is a name, and behind every name is a story.

As I've traveled across the country on our President's behalf, I've heard firsthand from job creators and working families about the burden that Obamacare has placed -- the burden of higher costs, fewer choices, and worse care for people who need it.

As Juanita has pointed out, in her words, "the high cost of healthcare has been the number one problem for small-business owners for 30 years." But as she noted, "Obamacare turned that problem into a crisis."

But I want to tell you, Juanita, and to all those gathered here today: Help is on the way and it's coming soon. (Applause.)

You know I have heard this same thing from businesses I have talked to -- small businesses seeing premiums skyrocket by 25 percent or more every single year. I've heard from entrepreneurs who had to actually drop their health insurance because it's completely unaffordable. And that's a heartache for a small-business owner. You want to be able to provide health insurance and benefits for your employees, but you got to make ends meet. Sometimes you got to make those hard choices.

Worst of all, I've heard from job creators who can't grow, and some who are even struggling to keep their doors open. The men and women of the National Federation of Independent Business know the truth: Obamacare has failed and Obamacare must go. And let me be clear: This is the moment. Now is the time.

Despite the opposition of literally every single Democrat in both chambers of Congress, on Tuesday, I'm pleased to report the Senate voted, and I cast the tie-breaker to begin the debate to repeal and replace Obamacare. And the NFIB was there, helping to make it happen. (Applause.)

Let me assure you, President Trump and our entire administration are literally working around the clock with Senate Republicans to finish what they started earlier this week. Throughout the rest of today and, I'm told, late into the hours of tonight, the Senate will continue debating proposals from Republicans and Democrats.

And when it's all said, the world's greatest deliberative body, I believe, will vote on a bill to keep Republicans' promise to the American people to repeal and replace Obamacare.

President Trump made it clear, in his words, just a few short days ago: "Inaction is not an option." And as the President said this morning to Senate Republicans, after seven years, this is their chance to shine. They can't let the American people down.

The Senate has an opportunity and an obligation to rescue the American people from the consequences of this failed policy. And when the time comes, every single senator -- Republican and Democrat -- owes it to America to step up, to do the right thing. They owe it to the American people to repeal and replace Obamacare. (Applause.)

And as is testament by your presence here today, the American people are watching. Because you all know what's at stake. What happens in the coming days will determine the future of American healthcare, and whether our leaders in Congress can demonstrate the courage and determination to keep their word.

But more than anything else, this will determine whether America still stands by principles that I believe are at the very heart of our experiment in self-government.

You know, for the past seven years, we've had a healthcare system based on the flawed premise that the federal government should order every American to buy health insurance, whether they want it or need it or not; that bureaucrats and politicians know better than patients and doctors; and that, worst of all, that the American people can't be trusted to run their own lives and make their own healthcare choices.

Well, today -- literally today -- we have a chance to take a giant step toward restoring a healthcare system based on personal responsibility, free-market competition, and state-based reform. And I believe the Senate will take that step and will deliver for the American people on a foundation of freedom. (Applause.)

The President and I believe that the Senate will do the right thing, that they will begin to dismantle the failed policy of Obamacare in the coming days. And President Trump will sign into law, when it's all said and done, a bill that puts our country on a path to better, more affordable healthcare for all the American people -- based on those timeless principles of freedom, free-market competition, and state-based reform.

And after that, I'll make you one more promise: Before the end of this year, we're going to roll up our sleeves, and this President is going to work with the Congress, and we're going to pass one of the largest tax cuts in American history. (Applause.)

I don't have to tell small-business owners that the Americans' tax code is one of the biggest barriers to success for working families and small businesses like all of you gathered here today. You know, there's an old joke that says that the Internal Revenue Code is 10 times the length of the Bible, but with none of the good news. (Laughter.)

Well, here's some real good news: We're going to cut taxes across the board for working families, small businesses, and family farms. (Applause.) And we're going to simplify the tax code by cutting seven brackets down to three; we'll eliminate the alternative minimum tax. And under President Donald Trump, I'm proud to say to small-business owners, we're going to repeal death taxes once and for all. (Applause.)

And when it comes to businesses, the President has made it clear that we're going to cut the business tax rate to 15 percent to make sure that businesses across this country can compete with businesses all across the world. And we're going to make sure small businesses can realize that benefit as well. (Applause.)

Our administration is already working with the Congress to craft a historic tax-cut bill. In fact, later today, Congress and the White House will issue a statement laying out our guiding principles for tax reform. I'll make you a promise: Discussions and negotiations will continue, details will continue to be worked out. But rest assured, we're going to cut taxes -- and we're going to cut taxes this year. (Applause.)

Men and women of the NFIB, this is the moment, now is the time. So today I want to offer you a challenge -- a challenge to continue to stand with our President as he fights for job creators all across this country and for a boundless American future.

As you meet with your elected representatives in Congress this week, tell them -- tell them you're counting on them to support the President's agenda to move this country forward. Tell them you're counting on them to repeal and replace Obamacare and cut taxes, and continue to roll back the heavy hand of government that stands in the way of our prosperity.

And when you go and speak with them, speak with confidence. The truth is that small-business owners, I think -- and maybe I'm a little biased because I come from a small, family business -- you're really the heart of America. In so many ways, every single one of you has a story that springs straight out of the American Dream. You embody the American spirit. You never quit, you never back down, you never give up, no matter the odds. That's how you make it in a small business.

And that's the attitude that you need to bring here to Washington, D.C. Tell them to bring the same determination and the same persistence to the cause of strengthening and reviving the American economy. And I just want to assure you that your voices will be heard, as they always have been throughout the 75-year history of the NFIB and your engagement.

The truth of the matter is that our elected representatives know where the strength of this country lies, and it lies, I believe, in many places -- it lies in the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America. (Applause.) It lies in the hearts of men and women who put on the uniform of law enforcement at every level in the United States of America. (Applause.) Our teachers, our public servants.

But I truly do believe that the strength of America also lies in the courage and in the hearts of men and women who get up every day, put their feet on the floor, and make a small business work. (Applause.)

And so I want to encourage you on. Let your voice be heard, but also have faith. Have faith that there are better days ahead for America; that what we've begun to see in the recovery of the American spirit and the rebound of the American economy is really just the beginning. And under President Donald Trump, with your help, I know the best days for America and for American small business are yet to come.

And, lastly, have that other kind of faith. This is a challenging time in the wider world, and it's been a challenging time for businesses. But help is on the way, and hope always springs eternal -- because for so many of you, like for me and my little family, our hope ultimately doesn't come from our government or from our elected leaders, but our hope comes from someplace deeper. And so I encourage you to avail yourself of that faith in these times, and pray for the good leaders who serve in this building. Continue to pray for our President and all the families that serve around him.

And pray with confidence that He who said: I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and future -- says that as much to this generation of Americans as He's ever said it before.

And so I say with faith today -- with boundless faith in the American people, so well represented here at the NFIB -- with faith in the determination of our President, and with faith in He who has ever been with those who first landed on the shores of this Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave, that we will make America prosperous again. We will make America safe again. And to borrow a phrase, together we will Make America Great Again.

Thank you very much. (Applause.) God bless you and God bless the United States of America. (Applause.) ##

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